

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 13432 251807Z

60

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7983

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 13432

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, KN

SUBJECT: SOVIET COMMENTS ON KOREAN INCIDENT: WITH FRIENDS LIKE
KIM, WHO NEEDS ENEMIES?

BEGIN SUMMARY. A SOVIET ORIENTALIST WAS OUTSPOKENLY CRITICAL
OF NORTH KOREAN LEADER KIM IL SUNG AND LAMENTED THE
SITUATION WHEREBY NORTH KOREAN BAHAVIOUR COULD POSE A DANGER
FOR THE GREAT POWERS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN A CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON AUGUST 24, ORIENTAL
STUDIES INSTITUTE DEPUTY DIRECTOR GANKOVSKIY VOICED REGRET
AND OUTRAGE OVER THE AUGUST 18 INCIDENT AT PANMUNJOM.
MAKING NO REFERENCE TO ANY ALLEGED PROVOCATION BY THE U.S.
OR THE SOUTH KOREANS, GANKOVSKIY LAUNCHED INTO A TIRADE
ABOUT KIM IL SUNG AND THE NORTH KOREANS DESCRIBING THEM AS
IRRESPONSIBLE AND HOT-HEADED. KIM, HE SAID EMPHATICALLY,
IS "UNEDUCATED AND NARROW-MINDED", SEEING THE WORLD
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 13432 251807Z

SOLELY FROM THE PECULIAR PERSPECTIVE OF PYONGYANG. KIM

HAS CONCENTRATED ALL POWER IN HIS OWN HANDS AND HAS BUILT UP AN EXTRAVAGANT CULT OF PERSONALITY. HE EVEN CLAIMS SINGLE-HANDED CREDIT FOR DEFEATING THE JAPANESE AND LIBERATING KOREA, GANKOVSKIY SAID SCORNFULLY. HE RULES A COUNTRY WHICH HAS NO ARMY, NO MONEY AND HARDLY ANY DOMESTIC ECONOMY, AND HE DEPENDS ENTIRELY ON THE SUPPORT OF OTHERS.

2. DRAWING ON HISTORICAL EXAMPLE, GANKOVSKIY DESCRIBED THE RIVALRY BETWEEN BALKAN PRINCES DURING THE DECADE BEFORE WORLD WAR I BROKE OUT. BECAUSE OF THEIR ALLIANCES WITH OUTSIDE POWERS, EVERY TRIVIAL MOVE BY ONE OF THESE RULERS BECAME A MATTER OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE IN ALL THE CAPITALS OF EUROPE, SAID GANKOVSKIY. AND EVENTUALLY THE ASSASSINATION OF FRANZ FERDINAND BY LOCAL NATIONALISTS IN SERBIA SET OFF THE WORLD WAR. GANKOVSKIY MADE HIS POINT EXPLICIT BY STATING THAT THE KOREAN SITUATION IS SIMILARLY ABSURD AND DANGEROUS, SINCE THE IRRESPONSIBLE ACTIONS OF A VIRTUAL NON-COUNTRY CAN RAISE THE DANGER OF GREAT POWER CONFRONTATION.

3. ASKED HOW MOSCOW SEES PEKING'S ATTITUDE TOWARD KOREA, GANKOVSKIY SAID CAUTIOUSLY THAT THE CHINESE DID NOT SEEM TO BE ENCOURAGING CONFRONTATION, BUT HE WAS NOT SURE WHETHER THEY WERE SEEKING TO PREVENT IT. HE SAID THAT PEKING'S RELATIONS WITH PYONGYANG SEEMED TO BE CLOSER THAN MOSCOW'S, BUT ADDED THAT "WE ARE NOT WELL-INFORMED ABOUT CHINA'S POLICIES". HE SAID THAT SINO-SOVIET RIVALRY PERMITTED COUNTRIES LIKE NORTH KOREA AND VIETNAM TO DO THINGS THEIR OWN WAY. THE COMMENTING FAVORABLY ON VIETNAMESE PREMIER PHAM VAN DONG'S SPEECH IN COLOMBO, CALLING FOR THE U.S. TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH HANOI, GANKOVSKIY SAID WHAT A DIFFERENCE IT WOULD MAKE IF NORTH KOREA WERE LED BY SOMEONE LIKE PHAM VAN DONG.

4. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED WHETHER KIM'S LONG-EXPECTED VISIT TO MOSCOW AS STILL BEING PLANNED FOR LATER THIS YEAR, GANKOVSKIY SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS, BUT NOT UNTIL SOME TIME AFTER THE PRESENT FUROR HAS DIED DOWN. PROVIDED THAT THE TENSIONS GENERATED BY THE INCIDENT PASS AWAY IN A REASONABLY SHORT TIME, THE INCIDENT WILL NOT WORSEN SOVIET-DPRK RELATIONS SIGNIFICANTLY, GANKOVSKIY ASSERTED, BUT IT WILL
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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 13432 251807Z

NOT HELP THEM EITHER, HE ADDED.

5. COMMENT. GANKOVSKIY'S REMARKS SEEMED ALMOST REHEARSED, AS THOUGH HE WAS CONSCIOUSLY STATING THE SOVIET REACTION TO THE INCIDENT. HE SPOKE WITH INTENSITY, WHICH WAS REINFORCED BY APPROPRIATE GESTURES. HE MADE NO MENTION OF ALLEGED U.S. OR SOUTH KOREAN PROVOCATION, DREW NO PARALLEL BETWEEN KIM AND ROK PRESIDENT PARK, AND IN FACT SAID

NOTHING ABOUT SOUTH KOREA AT ALL. HE CLEARLY BLAMED THE
NORTH KOREANS FOR THE INCIDENT, BUT HOPED THAT THE INCREASED
TENSION IN THE REGION WOULD FADE FAIRLY QUICKLY SO AS
TO REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW GREAT POWER CON-
FRONTATION OVER KOREA.
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